

Get Smokin Product of Strong Hurstland Farm Family

Get Stormy gelding broke through in Hill Prince Stakes (G2T) Oct. 19

By [Meredith Daugherty](#) | October 19, 2020



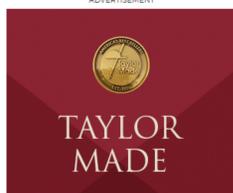
Get Smokin (inside) turns back Decorated Invader to win the Hill Prince Stakes at Belmont Park

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Three-year-old **Get Smokin** has spent the majority of 2020 trying, and falling just short, of adding a graded stakes victory to his resume. But the hard-knocking son of **Get Stormy**—who has trained under his sire's conditioner, Tom Bush—laid all his cards on the table Oct. 18 and finally took home the win in the \$150,000 Hill Prince Stakes (G2T) for sophomores at **Belmont Park**.

"I was just worried about the yielding turf because I didn't know if he would handle that very well or not," said the gelding's breeder, Alfred Nuckols Jr. of Hurstland Farm. "Being a speed horse, they tend to tire a little bit on those kinds of tracks. I was tickled to death. I thought the cut back to a mile was perfect for him. He ran a great race."

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"The horse has a huge heart," said Phil Hager of Taproot Bloodstock, who purchased Get Smokin as a yearling on behalf of the Mary Abeel Sullivan Revocable Trust. "He's always had speed and been pretty aggressive. We've tried to use that as a weapon in most of his races and it's worked out well but he kept getting caught right there at the end. We were lucky enough to get a really good ride and obviously (jockey) Javier (Castellano) was able to walk the dog a little bit. That was cool to win one. He deserved it."

While Nuckols is no stranger to what it takes to breed a stakes winner, as Get Smokin began his racing career the veteran horseman was cautiously hopeful the gelding would, like so many in his family, jump up and perform. Bred in partnership with Nuckols' longtime friend and former college roommate, James Greene Jr., Get Smokin hails from a Hurstland Farm family that dates back more than half a century. The gelding is the product of a combination of genetic gamble/pedigree deep dive into the families of both Nuckols' mare, **Hookah Lady**, and Crestwood Farm stallion Get Stormy.

"The family goes back Clever Bird," said Nuckols. "It's just a good old Hurstland family that goes back to Sally Catbird and Clever Bird who were mares back when my father and uncles ran the farm. It's been a good family for me all along."



Alfred Nuckols Jr. of Hurstland Farm

A daughter of Smoke Glacken, Hookah Lady showed early speed on the track when racing for Greene and Hurstland Farm. While she was not destined to be a stakes winner herself, there was enough moxie in her female line to suggest that she would likely succeed in the breeding shed.

"Hookah Lady was a really nice, fast horse," said Nuckols. "Unfortunately, she didn't like to be rated much either but she was awfully quick. We had bred her like that with Smoke Glacken as the sire. She would go right to the front and hold on as long as she could. She's one of the better mares I have with her family now."

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"I talked to Robert Keck at Crestwood and we bantered around about pedigrees. The first thing we both said was the more Rough Shod II we could bring into the family would be better. It's a 13-c family and I always like to double up with these pedigrees. So in it we have Seattle Slew over Mr. Leader, which is always good. Then King Pellinore (sire of Get Smokin's third dam, Smart Queen) was out of Thong and Thong was by Rough Shod II. Moccasin and Thong were full sisters,

so I had Rough Shod II in the mare's pedigree through a son and a daughter and Get Stormy has it through a daughter because Get Stormy traces back to Moccasin through Hail Atlantis (dam of Get Stormy's sire, Stormy Atlantic), who is out of Flippers who is out of Moccasin."

The experiment, which produced Get Smokin, proved to be a pleasant success for Nuckols who bred Hookah Lady back to the stallion when Get Smokin was a yearling.

"There were some things in that pedigree I really liked," said Nuckols. "Get Smokin was such a nice yearling which is why I bred her back to Get Stormy a second time. He more than followed through on what I needed."

At the 2018 October Sale at Fasig-Tipton, Hager was in the market for a Get Stormy foal for Sullivan, who had bred and raced the stallion. At Hurstland Farm, the agent found exactly what he wanted and was later successful in the bidding ring, securing Get Smokin for only \$11,000.

"The colt was a really nice physical," said Hager. "He was athletic and I really like buying off of Alfred because he is one of those hard-boot guys who raises really nice horses. He spends a lot of time on his matings so you know that that process has been well thought out. That is a big benefit. We didn't spend a whole lot of money but I think that was a function of the market and of the stallion's commercial appeal at that time. (Nuckols) bought a share in Get Stormy so he's bred to him every year and had some good horses by him. There is a lot that goes into it and there is a reason he breeds really good horses."

"(Get Smokin) was always a very, very nice looking colt," said Nuckols. "When we sold him I was tickled to death that Phil bought him for Tom Bush and Mrs. Sullivan. I knew he was going to go to a good home because Phil has bought a few horses from me in the past."

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Although prior to Sunday Get Smokin had yet to take home his first graded stake, Hager liked the horse so much that when shopping this year's Keeneland September Yearling Sale, he went back to Hurstland Farm and picked up a full sister to Get Smokin on behalf of a new, undisclosed client for \$60,000.

"She was a real knockout. She was the nicest yearling I had on the farm this year and she showed that in the sales pavilion," said Nuckols. "She was always the best looking of the bunch but I never dreamed she would bring \$60,000 especially with the climate we have now. I was just happy Phil came back again and bought her for a new client of Tom Bush's. She is going to where she will be appreciated and to a trainer who knows how to train them."

"Obviously, it was great to get that big of an update right away," said Hager, referencing the Hill Prince victory. "We didn't expect it, but I was really happy. The man who bought the filly, he was my first call after the race and he was pretty excited. That race was definitely a big thrill."



Bloodstock agent Phil Hager purchased a full sister to Get Smokin at this year's Keeneland September Sale

After failing to produce a foal this past season, Nuckols said he had stepped away from his breeding plan and bred Hookah Lady to Spendthrift Farm's freshman stallion **Vino Rosso**—who has trained under his sire's conditioner, Tom Bush—laid all his cards on the table Oct. 18 and finally took home the win in the \$150,000 Hill Prince Stakes (G2T) for sophomores at **Belmont Park**.

"I got two very nice individuals out of her by Get Stormy," said Nuckols. "We were hoping to get the mare started with some good winners but he has exceeded those expectations."

"I bred her to Vino Rosso this past year because I'm trying something different with the **Curlin** route and maybe we will get something more commercial. But I'll have to think hard about who I'll breed her back to this coming year. When you have a horse like Get Smokin by Get Stormy and now a full sister in the pipeline that I know is a real nice filly, you kind of wonder if it wouldn't be best to go back to the dance with the partner that brought you. It'll be fun trying to mate her this year."